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The directives of the 19th Congress of the VKP(b) for the Fifth Five-Year Plan proposed "an increase in the total volume of state capital construction for 1951 - 1955 of about 90 percent" and "a reduction in the cost of construction work of not less than 20 percent." Every year, capital construction takes over four-fifths of all the cement produced, about five-sixths of soft roofing (Ruberoïd, pergamin, and roofing paper), almost all the slate, more than one-third of glass, and over one-fourth of all the supply of lumber and metals. According to a rough estimate, several million carloads of sand, gravel, and broken stones are used annually in construction.

During the First Five-Year Plan and the first part of the Second, various ministries and departments established norms for determining the amount of materials needed for their construction projects. These norms were calculated on the basis of materials required to build one cubic meter of a structure, or some other unit of measurement. At that time, however, there was no accurate method for determining the measurement of a construction project, and so the norms meant very little. As the volume of construction increased during 1936 - 1937, a new set of norms was established, based on the materials required for one million rubles of construction and installation work. Different norms were established for various branches of construction and for different subdivisions of the main branches. The latter included industrial, public, and housing construction.

Since then, this method has been worked out in great detail. For instance, the Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgical Industry has different norms under "industrial construction" for the construction of blast furnaces, steel mills, steel rolling mills, repair and auxiliary shops, coke and chemical plants, machine-building plants, metal-products plants, fireproof-materials plants, etc. Under "housing construction," it has different norms for standard structures, wooden structures, masonry structures with few stories, and multistory masonry structures. The norms for the same materials for different branches of industries or different types of construction vary greatly; for instance, the average norm of metal consumption for one million rubles of construction and installation work in the Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgical Industry is 60

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tons, whereas for blast furnaces, open-hearth furnaces, and rolling plants, it fluctuates between 150 and 200 tons per one million rubles. ^{Here a footnote by the author states that the figures of norms mentioned in his article are not accurate but are given merely as an illustration.}

The Ministry of Procurement has an average norm of 3,500 square meters of soft roofing materials and 110 tons of cement for one million rubles of construction and installation work. The same ministry's norms for grain storehouses are 17,000-18,000 square meters of roofing and only 10 tons of cement; for grain elevators, the norms are only 500 square meters of roofing but up to 700 tons of cement per one million rubles of construction and installation work. The effect on the cost of construction of substituting one material for another is illustrated in the following: The norm of metal needed per one square meter of a steel frame structure varies from 150 to 200 kilograms. If reinforced concrete is substituted for the steel structural members, with steel floors left in, the norm will be 80-100 kilograms. If brick-wall-type construction is substituted for the reinforced concrete, the norm per one square meter will be reduced from 60-90 kilograms to 30-45 kilograms.

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